

Modern Slavery Statement and Policy



Sandwell Council's Modern Day Slavery Statement and Policy 2017/18

In accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, Sandwell Council makes the following statement in relation to the financial year 2017/18 to ensure that Modern Slavery (i.e. slavery and human trafficking), is not taking place in any part of its own business or any of its supply chains.

Sandwell Council is absolutely committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in our corporate activities and to ensuring that our supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

This policy and statement sets out the Council's actions to understand all potential modern day slavery risks relating to our services. We are satisfied that steps outlined in our action plan will address the Council's commitment to preventing slavery and human trafficking.



Councillor Steve Eling, Leader of the Council

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Eling'.

Date: 30/11/17



Jan Britton, Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jan Britton'.

Date: 26/11/17

Introduction

Sandwell Council is absolutely committed to preventing slavery and human trafficking in our corporate activities and to ensuring that our supply chains are free from slavery and human trafficking.

This statement sets out the Council's actions to understand all potential modern day slavery risks related to its services and businesses. It also puts in place steps that are aimed at mitigating these risks.

As part of Local Government, the Council recognises that it has a responsibility to take a robust approach to slavery and human trafficking. In addition to the Council's responsibility as an employer, it also acknowledges its duty as a Borough Council to notify the Secretary of State of suspected victims of slavery or human trafficking as introduced by section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act states that the employer's slavery and human trafficking statement might include information on:

- its structure, business and supply chains;
- its policies in relation to slavery and human trafficking;
- its due diligence processes in relation to slavery and human trafficking in its business and supply chains;
- the parts of its business and supply chains where there is a risk of slavery and human trafficking taking place, and the steps that it has taken to assess and manage that risk;
- its effectiveness in ensuring that slavery and human trafficking is not taking place in its business or supply chains, measured against such performance indicators as it considers appropriate; and
- the training about slavery and human trafficking available to its staff.

Oganisational structure and supply chains

This statement covers the activities of Sandwell Council. The Council only operates within the United Kingdom.

Sandwell Council is a local authority which provides a wide range of statutory and discretionary services for its residents, businesses, visitors and partners.

Sandwell has a growing population and economy. The latest population estimate for Sandwell is 316,720 which shows an increase of over 11% since 2001. The increase in population can largely be attributed to significant increases in net international migration and in the number of births, along with a gradual fall in the number of deaths. As such, the population has become increasingly diverse, with 34% from

ethnic backgrounds other than white British. The latest official projections show a projected further increase of 26,800 between 2014 and 2024 in Sandwell (ONS).

The Council has a new 2030 vision with 10 ambitions, 5 people centred and 5 place centred. Preventing slavery and tackling human trafficking cuts across all 10 ambitions. The Constitution outlines the way in which the Council is organised to carry out its affairs. It explains the structures and decision making processes of the Council and includes the rules and procedures that govern the behaviour of those who work for or represent the Council. The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the council's governance framework are detailed in its Code of Corporate Governance.

The Council holds a central register of all of its contracts and procures goods and services from various suppliers. This is governed by the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules which require all relevant supplier contracts to confirm compliance with the Modern Slavery Act.

Enforcing this statement

Enforcement of the Council's anti-slavery initiatives will be undertaken as follows:

- **Policies:** In addition to this policy, the Council has a number of policies and procedures that contribute to meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act and preventing slavery and human trafficking in our services and operations, which are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure they remain current and relevant.
- **Risk assessments (RA):** RAs are undertaken in service areas where there is a potential risk for of modern slavery or human trafficking to exist. The risk assessment will be recorded in operational risk registers and reviewed in line with the corporate risk management strategy.
- **Investigations/due diligence:** Any concerns regarding modern slavery or human trafficking will be investigated and will be raised with the relevant Service Director in the first instance.
- **Training:** Awareness of the issue of human trafficking and modern slavery has been raised in the Chief Executive's blog and a training needs analysis will be undertaken of all Council staff to determine what further training needs to be done to ensure a better understanding of and response given to any identified slavery and human trafficking risks.
- **Collaborative working:** The Council is committed to and will work collaboratively with relevant organisations across all sectors to support citizens in Sandwell affected by Modern Day Slavery.

Relevant policies and standards

The Council reviews its policies and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure they remain compliant and fit for purpose. The following policies and procedures are considered to be key in meeting the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act and preventing slavery and human trafficking in our services and operations.

- **Safeguarding:** The Council embraces its responsibility to develop, implement and monitor policies and procedures to safeguard the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. The Council uses a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy which all staff and councillors are expected to read and work within. The Council works within multi-agency partnerships to protect and safeguard people.
- **Confidential Reporting Code (Whistle Blowing Policy) :** The Council encourages all of its employees, customers and other business partners to report any concerns related to the direct activities or the supply chains of the organisation. This includes any circumstances that may give rise to an enhanced risk of slavery or human trafficking. The organisation's Whistleblowing policy and procedure is designed to make it easy to make disclosures without fear of retaliation.
- **Officer and Members codes of conduct:** The codes make it clear to employees and Members the actions and behaviour expected of them when representing the organisation. The organisation strives to maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethical behaviour in all its operations and when managing our supply chain and any breaches are investigated.
- **Procurement and contract procedure rules:** The Council is committed to ensuring that its suppliers adhere to the highest standards of ethics. The Council's procurement and contract procedure rules requires its contractors to provide confirmation of compliance with the Act.
- **Recruitment:** The Council's recruitment processes are transparent and reviewed regularly. They include robust procedures for vetting new employees, which ensures they are able to confirm their identities and qualifications, and they are paid directly into an appropriate, personal bank account.
- **Remuneration and pay:** The Council has a pay policy statement which provides transparency with regard to the council's approach to setting the pay of its employees. It operates a Job Evaluation Scheme to ensure that all employees are paid fairly and equitably. The Council has paid the National Living Wage or more to its employees since April 2016.

- **Agency workers:** The Council uses only specified, reputable employment agencies to source labour. It verifies the practices of any new agency it is using before accepting workers from that agency.

Due diligence

The council undertakes due diligence when considering taking on new suppliers and regularly reviews its existing suppliers. This is the responsibility of the individual contract managers. The organisation's due diligence and reviews include:

- maintaining a central register of all of the Council's contracts;
- mapping and reviewing the supply chain broadly to assess particular product or geographical risks including risk of modern slavery and human trafficking;
- conducting supplier assessments on a regular basis focussing on financial stability, covering insurance, compliance with various employment policies and which have a greater degree of focus on slavery and human trafficking where general risks are identified;
- contract monitoring and taking steps to improve poor supplier performance and practices, including providing advice to suppliers and requiring them to implement action plans, to demonstrate compliance with the contract, for example compliance with safer recruitment requirements;
- invoking sanctions against suppliers who fail to improve their performance in line with an action plan or who seriously violate the Council's expectations of suppliers, including the termination of the business relationship;
- participating in collaborative initiatives focused on human rights in general, and slavery and human trafficking in particular;
- all invitations to tender for business with the Council will include the following statement:

We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery or human trafficking in our supply chains. SMBC will not support or deal with any business knowingly involved in slavery or human trafficking. We use the Crown Commercial Services Standard Selection Questionnaire which includes a self- certification element to our tendering processors. These are used to assess suppliers' policies and practices on slavery and human trafficking.

Risk assessment

The Council has undertaken a risk assessment using its professional, legal, risk and procurement teams to determine the risk exposure. Whilst the risk of slavery and human trafficking in the Council's activities and supply chains has been assessed as low, the Council has identified that Sandwell is an area where there are potentially a high level of victims of modern slavery living in the area. As a result, the Council has

taken steps to mitigate this risk and is taking further steps to continue mitigation. Details of these measures are included in the action plan attached to this statement.

Staff training and awareness

The Council is developing a tiered programme of mandatory training that employees must complete depending on their job role. The programme enables officers in community facing roles to know how to identify and report suspected incidents of abuse and neglect. The modern slavery training will cover:

- the Council's purchasing practices that influence supply chain conditions and which will ensure such practices are designed to prevent:
 - purchases at unrealistically low prices,
 - the use of labour engaged on unrealistically low wages or wages below a country's national minimum wage; or,
 - the provision of products by an unrealistic deadline;
- how to assess the risk of slavery and human trafficking in relation to various aspects of the business, including resources and support available;
- how to identify the signs of slavery and human trafficking;
- the initial steps that should be taken if slavery or human trafficking is suspected;
- how to escalate potential slavery or human trafficking issues to the relevant parties both within Sandwell Council and elsewhere;
- the external help available, for example through the Modern Slavery Helpline, The Gang-masters and Labour Abuse Authority and the "Stronger together" initiative;
- the messages, business incentives or guidance that can be given to suppliers and other business partners and contractors to implement anti-slavery policies;
- the steps that should be taken if suppliers or contractors do not implement antislavery practices;
- policies in high-risk scenarios, including removal from the organisation's supply chains.

Note on practical guidance to identify trafficking and modern day slavery

In the course of your employment or business with the Council, you may come across situations and people that cause you concern. This section seeks to give some practical guidance to assist with deciding if someone may have been trafficked or is the victim of modern slavery.

Victims are trafficked all over the world for little or no money – including to and within the UK. They can be forced to work in the sex trade, domestic service, forced labour, criminal activity or have their organs removed to be sold. There is no typical victim and some victims do not understand they have been exploited and that they are entitled to help and support. Victims are often trafficked to a foreign country where they cannot speak the language, have their travel and identity documents removed and are told that if they try to attempt an escape, they or their families will be harmed.

Key indicators of trafficking include:

- Is the person in possession of their own passport, identification or travel documents or are these documents in possession of someone else?
- Does the person act as if they were instructed or coached by someone else?
- Do they allow others to speak for them when spoken to directly?
- Was the person recruited for one purpose and forced to engage in some other job? Have transport costs been paid for by facilitators, whom they must pay back through working or providing services?
- Does the person receive little or no payment for their work? Is someone else in control of their earnings?
- Does the victim have freedom of movement? Are they dropped off and collected from work?
- Is the person withdrawn or do they appear frightened?
- Has the person or their family been threatened with harm if they attempt to escape?
- Is the person under the impression they are bonded by debt, or in a situation of dependence?
- Has the person been physically or emotionally harmed or deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care or other life necessities
- Can the person freely contact friends or family? Do they have limited social interaction or contact with people outside their immediate environment?

This list is not exhaustive. Remember, a person may display a number of the trafficking indicators set out above but they may not necessarily be a victim of trafficking. Often you will build up a picture of the person's circumstances which may indicate that something is not quite right. **If you have a suspicion, [report it.](#)**

Actions taken in 2016/17 and further actions for 2017/18

Based on the Council's established risk management approach, a delivery plan has been developed to include the following actions that have been taken to mitigate the risk of modern slavery and ensure continued compliance with the Act. Over the coming year, actions to further mitigate any risk and further enhance governance arrangements will be taken. The implementation and effectiveness of these actions will be monitored as part of the next annual review of this statement, as well as by the Modern Slavery Working Group.

Actions implemented in 2016/17	Key actions for 2017/18
Policy and process	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Modern Day Slavery policy and statement prepared. • Establishment of the Modern Day Slavery (MDS) Working Group. Agreed Terms of Reference and membership from a cross section of council services and partners including, neighbourhoods, children's services, adult services, legal, procurement, public health, governance, regulatory services, Communications. • Updated procurement and contract procedure rules to ensure MDS incorporated into all contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval and publication of MDS policy and statement. • Review of Terms of Reference and membership. • Obtain assurances on supply chain compliance with Act
Communication and training	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated internet web page established with information on modern slavery • Publication placed in Sandwell Herald • Chief Executive blog on MDS • Member briefing carried out • Presentation at Landlord's Forum • Training on MDS rolled out in Neighbourhoods and part of 'See Something, Do Something' • Presentation at safeguarding boards' meetings/ conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and develop a tiered approach to training across the Council and partners
Data	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has commissioned a profile of MDS for Sandwell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place a system for sharing intelligence, data and information with partners
Partners	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WMP carried out various 'Operations' in conjunction with SMBC and partners where they discovered or suspected Modern Day Slavery • MDS working Group membership includes key partners including, West Midlands Police, Rights and Equality Sandwell, Womes Aid, Hope for Justice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a Sandwell Anti Slavery Network with partners (SASN)

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